763 to hear confession and pray at the bedside. To become eligible for full last rites, elderly pious persons often take vows as monks or nuns.

764 If the deceased was a priest or monk, the arms are tied across the chest in the sign of the cross. For a lay person they are tied across the middle of the body. Eyes and mouth are closed. The corpse is tied in a mat. No permanent gravestones are set in the churchyard where most members of the congregation are buried (poor non-

764 members are buried in the bush). In the case of a "great man", the grave is sometimes marked for some years, and the skull and bones later sent to a sacred monastery for storage under a cave-ledge. In a few years the place of burial is usually obliterated by the rains, unless rocks have been gradually piled on it as a memorial.

At the burial, the priest chants from the book "mäṣehafä genzät", the funeral book which begins with

765 the "fetät", the prayer for absolution of sins. For a priest or monk, the parchment "lefafä ṣedeq" (Band-let of Righteousness) is spread over the body. It is an early Coptic Book of the Dead, containing spells and formulae that apparently originated in Egypt, dating partly to early periods.

The confessor-priest prays for the ascension of the soul, as the body is lowered into the grave. Neighbors express condolence to the kinfolk wishing that no further tribulations hit them. This is returned with the wish "May you have a burier in your old age, who will give "täzkar" for you". The confessor inherits

764 personal belongings such as shamma, horncup, oxhide bed-cover.

765 The tăzkar is the memorial feast 40 days after death, on which, under favorable conditions, the soul is believed to be freed from purgatory. Preparations for this feast are made almost as soon as the funeral is over. Kinfolk and neighbors bring food and drink, but despite that, tazkar feasts are often costly, far beyond the economic means of poorer families. Money must be given to the priests who recite the "fetät", the prayer for absolution. It is the responsibility not only of direct descendants, but of the entire kinfolk to arrange for a "tăzkar", and it is a great shame when a person has no tazkar. No tazkar is made for unbaptized babies; for violaters of the fasts of Wednesday, Friday and lent; for suicides. Also, when a person dies what is considered a particularly unnatural death, by drowning, fire, lightning, etc., the priests have to decide whether a tazkar can be held, or whether the death was some special punishment for some great capital crime that had gone undetected.

d) "Saluting the church", and Private Communion.

788 Though lay individuals do not usually participate in church worship, going to the "betă kristyan" (church) is a formal affair. The shamma is redraped when entering the churchyard, so as to form a cross-wise fold over

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

763 (togas), horncups, etc, usually are given to the confessor, also some cash. In return, the confessor gives last rites, absolving the dying from sin, and, after death, assigns a burial place in the churchyard if the deceased was a member of the parish. A circumference of rocks is set around the grave, but no permanent gravestones, so that after a few years the growth of bush and the rains have obscured the spot. Exceptions are only in case of noblemen, "tellaqsäw", (great men) where markings are remembered long enough to permit digging up the bones if they wanted them sent to some holy monastery, such as Dabra Libanos. Non-members of the parish, especially if poor, are buried in the bush some distance from the residential area.

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[763] The confessor stays with the dying, praying until the last moment. When death sets in, the eyes and lips are closed, the corpse is washed, the big toes and thumbs are tied, the arms folded in a cross, so that the hands cover the sexual parts. The body is wrapped in a shamma, and tied in a mat of palm branches or bread reeds, (called "sälyen"); tied on top of the head, across area of the eyes, neck, biceps, forearm, waist, thigh, below knee, and over the heel. The corpse is placed on the bed ("alga", carried to church, entering at the north gate as "salute" to the church, the mass is chanted, incense is burned in raising clouds, then the corpse is buried in a comparatively shallow grave which is covered with earth and then rocks. It is usually not marked with a name.

765 The moment death has set in, women run screaming out of the hut to announce their grief, wailing loudly and incessantly. In some areas they still scratch and cut themselves till blood flows, though the emperor's urging of restraint is reducing this. The

177
755 c. Summary of the däbtära's syncretism in healing the spirit.

It is clear from the above that a number of ancient spirit cosmologies have contributed to, and survived in, Amhara healing practices: Ancient Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Arab, Christian, and African. In fact, the syncretism has been so complex, for so many centuries, that it would be impossible to trace all the roots, with any degree of valid certainty. However, several traces do stand out and their etiology bears significantly on present function.

The book "Lefafa Tsedeq" of the Coptic Abyssinian Church (lit. Book of Righteous Life, in Geez), contains spells and formulae attributed to Jesus Christ and Mary, but actually showing influences
764 from the Egyptian "Book of the Dead". Its function among the Amhara is entirely in the context of funerals and funeral mass during memorial services.

Much of the Greek-Byzantine influence may have entered directly at the time Abyssinia was christianized; but more came via Arabic, later. This includes patches of Greek mythology, legends in connection with the New Testament, and traces of the astrological work of claudius Ptolemy (about 150 A.D. in origin), known in the West as Almagest". [123]

Hebrew influence is most commonly encountered with reference to the mystic powers of King Solomon, who occupies about the same role in Amhara spirit cosmology as in Jewish mythology (Kabala). Amhara amulets refer, e.g. to the "fishnet of Solomon", in which he could catch demons as readily as a fisherman catches fish in the rainy season. The powers of archangels, e.g. Fenuël, Gabriël, etc., are very similar to Jewish cabalistic ideas, [124]

123. See Strelcyn, S: Un magicien grec en Ethiopie. Journal Asiatique, 1951, p. 175-192
124. Walker, John: Folk Medicines in Modern Egypt. London 1934.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

000 a burn, because their colour is dark. On the occasion of
●764 death, I never saw great personages borne away; but of small people, and of others rather better, an infinite number. Their burials are in this manner. They do not use candles after death, but much incense. They carry them away wrapped up[1] in a shroud, and some of the more honoured have over the shroud tanned ox-hides, and are placed on trestles. The priests come for them, and pray shortly, and then set out at once with them on the way to the church, with cross, thurible, and holy water, running so that a man cannot catch them up. They do not bring the dead man into the church, but place him close to the grave; they do not use our office for him, nor do they recite psalms, neither do they say anything from the Book of Job. I asked what it was that they prayed; they told me that they read the Gospel of St. John all complete. And so they give him to the grave with their incense and holy water, and they do not say mass for the defunct, nor of devotion for any living person, nor more than one mass a day in each church; and all are communicants, as many as go to it.

CAP. XXIII.—*Of the situation of the town of Barua, chief place of the kingdom of the Barnagais, and of his hunting.*

361 This town of Barua is very good, and it is situated on a very high rock above a river, upon which are situated the king's houses, which they call Beteneguz, which means houses of the king. They are well situated in the manner of a fortress. All the rest is a great plain and an infinite number of large villages at the extremities of the
[231] fields. There is much breeding of all sorts of flocks, cows, goats and sheep, and of much game of all sorts

[1] *Envorilhados* for *enrodilhados*.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

may become a nun or remain a widow as she pleases. If a 793
priest sleeps with another woman whilst his wife is alive he 684
does not enter the church any more, nor does he enjoy its 587
goods, and remains as a layman. And this I know from having seen a priest accused before the patriarch of having slept with a woman, and I saw that the priest confessed the offence, and the patriarch commanded him not to carry a cross in his hand, nor to enter a church, nor to enjoy the liberties of the church, and to become a layman. If any priests after becoming widowers marry, they remain laymen, As it happened to Abuquer, who married Romana Orque, sister of Prester John, who I have already said was a priest, chief chaplain of Prester John, and he was disordained[1] and made a layman. He no longer enters the church, and receives the communion at the door of the church as a layman, and among the women. The sons of the priests 793
are for the most part priests, because in this country there [871]
are no schools, nor studies, nor masters to teach, and the clergy teach that little that they know to their sons: and so they make them priests without more legitimisation, neither does it seem to me that they require it, since they are legitimate sons. All are ordained by the Abima Markos, for in all the kingdoms of Ethiopia there is no other bishop or person who ordains. The orders are given in two stages, as I will relate further on. I with my own eyes saw them given many times. In all this country the churchyards are [764]
inclosed by very strong walls, that the wild beasts may not disinter the dead bodies. They show them great reverence, [576]
no man riding on a mule passes before a church, even though he is going in a great hurry, without dismounting, until he has passed the church and churchyard a good bit.

[1] *Foy desordenado e feito leigo*; not a correct expression.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

that you are heartily sorry that it happened, I do not reckon that you are further liable in the crime of sacrilege, than if the wine had not been consecrated at all. You are to humble yourself, and sincerely regret that so irreverent an accident happened in your hands, and in your time; but as you did not intend it, and could not prevent it, the consequence of an accident, where inattention is exceedingly culpable, will be imputed to you, and nothing further."

The priest declared to me, with great earnestness, that he never did believe that the elements in the eucharist were converted by consecration into the real body and blood of Christ. He said, however, that he believed this to be the Roman Catholic faith, but it never was his; and that he conceived the bread was bread, and the wine was wine, even after consecration. From this example, which occurred merely accidentally, and was not the fruit of interrogation or curiosity, it appears to me, whatever the Jesuits say, some at least among the Abyssinians do not believe the real presence in the eucharist; but further I am not enough informed to give a positive opinion. To follow this investigation more curiously would have been attended with a considerable degree of danger; and therefore I have stated my only means of knowledge, and leave my readers entirely to the freedom of their own opinion, and to after inquiry and information.

The Abyssinians are not all agreed about the state of souls before the resurrection of the body. The opinion which generally prevails is, that there is no third state: but that, after the example of the thief, the souls of good men enjoy the beatific vision immediately upon the separation from the body. But I must here observe, that their practice and books do both contradict this; for, as often as any person dies, alms are given, and prayers are offered for the souls

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

of those departed, which would be vain did they believe they were already in the presence of God, and in possession of the greatest bliss possible, wanting nothing to complete it. "Remember," says their liturgy, "O Lord! the souls of thy servants, our father Abba Matthias, and the rest of our saints, Abba Salama, and Abba Jacob." In another place, "Remember, O Lord! the kings of Ethiopia, Abreha, and Atzbeha, Caleb, and Guebra Mascal." And again, "Release, O, Lord! our father Antonius, and Abba Macarius." If this is not directly acknowledging a separate state, it can have no meaning at all.

I have already said, that the Agaazi, the predecessors of those people that settled in Tigre from the mountains of the Habab, were shepherds adjoining to the Red Sea; that they speak the language Geez, and are the only people in Abyssinia in possession of letters; that these are all circumcised, both men and women. The former term, as applied to men, is commonly known to every one the least acquainted with the Jewish history. The latter is, as far as I know, a rite merely Gentile; although in Africa, at least that part adjoining to Egypt and the Red Sea, it is much more known and more universally practised than the other. This I shall call *excision*, that I may express this uncommon operation by as decent a word as possible. The Falasha likewise submit to both.

These nations, however they agree in their rite, differ in their accounts of the time they received this ceremony, as well as the manner of performing it. The Abyssinians of Tigre say, that they received it from Ishmael's family and his descendants, with whom they were early connected in their trading voyages. They say also, that the queen of Saba, and all the women of that coast, had suffered excision at the usual time of life, before puberty, and before her journey to Je-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

692 nishes all persons by that authority, even those of the Abuna's family, without any sort of deference paid to him; and this, as appears by the judges, or king's records, is of very ancient standing. The king calls an assembly of the clergy when he pleases, generally with the advice of the Abuna, and there is none considered legal if he is not present, if in the kingdom.

[682] Welled Hayrat (Ras Michael's son) was excommunicated for killing a refugee at the Abuna's feet, in consequence of which he confiscated the Abuna's villages in Tigre, nor was the curse ever taken off *. The Itchegue, or prior of the 693 monks, if he be chosen a lay-man, must be ordained by the 793 Abuna. He is named by the king, who nominates all superiors of monasteries. The Lika-cahanat, or chief of the priests, is ordained by the Abuna and Itchegue, who both hold a corner of a scarf put upon him. He is an inquisitor of morals among the priests, and has so much salt and cloth from each district. A priest at his ordination pays three salts to the Abuna. He comes to the house of the latter, enters, and kisses the threshold. The Abuna, sitting on a sofa at one end of the room, reads the Scriptures to himself. Then having paid his salt, the person retires and kisses the threshhold, returning without imposition of hands, or any ceremony. Old men are made priests, and young men deacons by a simple jussit. More probable accounts say, that there is only one salt paid, that the person stands at the door, while the Abuna, having made the sign of the cross, holding it in his hand, says, "I have ordained you a priest." The person then enters the room, kisses the cushion of the sofa, and retires. Many are ordained that can neither read nor write.

[764] The Abyssinians have an office for the dead; and worship 778 pictures of saints, even such as are not consecrated. This we had an opportunity of seeing, every time we were obliged to draw some Madonna. All those that saw it, kissed the 000 ground before it, with their foreheads on the earth. The

* The Abuna's house is a kind of sanctuary, in which criminals are protected from massacre, not from trial. They are sometimes tried there by the royal judges, or dragged from it to the tribunal.

[p. 56]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

pleasure among the Amhara, but also as a typical response to situations which arouse anxiety. The crisis of death is met first of all by a prolonged ritual of wailing, and this is followed by a series of memorial feasts which occur on fixed days following the person's death. Any kind of bad news evokes repeated exclamations of "Ay! Ay!" When a child or wife is punished, the response is a prolonged and monotonous yell usually out of proportion to the actual pain felt. In the anxious hour before battle, war chants and boastful cries tune up the warriors' spirits. Moments of great awe, finally, such as the appearance of the holy ark when it is brought out of the church or the arrival of some great political personage, occasion a shrill ululation.

Response to illness was the anxiety area chosen as an index of positive fixation by Whiting and Child in their cross-cultural study of *Child Training and Personality*. They assumed that a fixation on oral gratification would express itself in a preference for therapies which involve swallowing something.[19] In this area, too, Amhara culture displays a preoccupation with orality, and not just in the form of swallowing. Something akin to a general principle for oral therapy appears in the well-known Amharic proverb: "For headache, shout on it! For stomach-ache, eat on it!"

A number of the oral therapies practiced by the Amhara are naturally functional, such as drinking a purgative made from leaves of the *kosso* tree to cure tapeworm, or eating a kind of unleavened corn bread to arrest dysentery. Beyond this, most of their magical therapies are also oral. Drinking holy water (and sometimes bathing in it) is believed to cure nearly every sort of affliction, from rheumatism and leprosy to eye and ear ailments. In some regions it is believed that eating the liver of a hyena will cure syphilis. Psychotherapy, too, often relies on oral remedies: the *zār* on a patient is often placated by feeding him, via the patient, a sumptuous meal. Oral types of prophylaxis are also to be noted. Garlic is eaten in order to prevent malaria. Certain kinds of animals are eaten on special occasions in order to ward off sickness. Finally, there is the remarkable phenomenon of the *lālibalā*, a night singer, who can protect himself against hereditary leprosy only by singing out loud in the night air.

In general, one can say that the Amhara have a tendency to attribute magical efficacy to oral incorporation and, to a lesser extent, to the adroit use of language. The latter belief appears in the assumption that human problems are solved by attaining some particularly fortunate verbal formulation, and in the association of outstanding wisdom with unusual mastery of language. The former appears in beliefs and legends which associate eating a lot with the attainment of unusual bravery, longevity, and physical strength. A legend about the invader Aḥmad Grāñ, for example, relates that as a baby he was able to consume fourteen bowls of *Injarā* at one sitting. A num-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Spontaneous co-operation is most in evidence among the Amhara at times of crisis. When death is announced, relatives and friends promptly repair to the home of the deceased and offer their help. They build the coffin and construct a *dāsi* (a temporary shelter near the house to accommodate all the expected visitors). They bring food and drink to help provide for the many who will come to pay their respects, and will similarly provide help on the occasion of the big memorial feasts to follow. Like assistance is rendered during other crises, such as prolonged illnesses or fire. Such forms of co-operation set another significant limit to egoistic orientation among the Amhara.

It is in the realm of interaction involving serious interests, touching layers of the personality deeper than those required for the formalities of etiquette, that Amhara egoism is most conspicuous. Here everything seems to conspire against generous communication and concord of opinion. As we have already observed, the Amhara are quick to become argumentative in ordinary conversation. *Litigation* is one of the most prominent forms of interaction among the Amhara. One can scarcely spend a day in the Amhara countryside without encountering litigants, whether under a tree, at a marketplace, or in the courtyard of some lord. A nobleman can never travel about the country without being accosted on the way by litigants anxious to have him hear their stories.

Litigation is, of course, an endemic feature of peasant civilizations. Yet there can be no doubt that for the Amhara this form embodies a basic psychological disposition that differs from that of the people of other peasant civilizations. In traditional China, to take a case of marked contrast, such interpersonal conflict, far from being relished, was deliberately avoided. The Chinese considered going to court to be an extravagance, and the village judge was one of the most underemployed members of the community. In China, parties to a dispute preferred to assemble at the teahouse and to seek a solution through discussion and negotiation. The Amhara, on the other hand, seeks to maximize the opportunity for self-assertion through litigious disputes.* Ordinary sociability among the Amhara is saturated with references to litigation. Current court cases comprise one of the more common topics of conversation.

Beyond litigation, *conflict* is often expressed in more violent forms. Fights with the *dulā* erupt when altercation becomes too heated. Throwing stones is another accepted mode of combat, especially among youth. Protracted enmities tend to eventuate in such acts as house-burning, assault with swords or rifles, and (according to Amhara belief, at least) poisoning.

While it is true that Amhara culture provides means and a certain amount

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* Some indication of the gross national significance of this phenomenon is afforded by the following comparison: twenty-seven high court judges are sufficient to handle the litigation for all of England and Wales; the corresponding number for Ethiopia is *one hundred and eighteen*.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

permissive rather than prescriptive, and the degree to which individual rights are protected against the demands of collectivities.

In pursuing this analysis we shall examine in turn the three main institutional orders which were structurally differentiated in Amhara society: the kinship system, the church, and the military-political system. In conclusion we shall discuss some more general features of social organization among the Amhara which relate to the question of individual independence.

Kinship

A base line of social constraint among the Amhara is provided by the obligations inherent in their family system. The husband must work to provide food and to defend the boundaries of the family land against all comers. The wife must care for all that transpires within the home compound—preparing of food, fetching water, caring for infants, spinning cotton, tending the fire—and must avoid sexual relationships with other men. The children must tend the flocks, do other work chores, and generally obey the slightest command of any of their elders. Neglect of any of these basic obligations brings sharp reprisals: divorce of the husband, beatings of the wife and children.

Obligations toward the parents persist, moreover, long after the children have married and established families of their own. Young married men are supposed to contribute one or two days a week to working their fathers' land, and to assist them in time of litigation. They are obliged to care for their parents when the latter have become too old to provide for themselves, an obligation sometimes discharged on a rotating basis among the surviving children. There is also a solemn obligation for the children to arrange the appropriate memorial feasts (*tazkār*) following the death of a parent, especially the one that is due on the fortieth day after death.

Adolescent children are subject to the will of their parents with respect to choice of a spouse, and youths are expected to follow their fathers' wishes in connection with adult work roles. Threat of disinheritance is the powerful consideration that underpins these constraints. For their part, the parents are obliged to keep their land in the family. They may not sell it to outsiders, and must bequeath goods and land to their children, dividing them equally among the consanguine children, with perhaps a certain amount extra for the oldest son.

With regard to siblings and more distant kin, however, relations are rather casual and obligations few. Although residence tends to be virilocal among the Amhara, descent is bilateral. Except for a small number of royal and aristocratic families, therefore, there are no obligations with respect to corporate lineages. The absence of formal structure in extended kin relations is

304 the names of saints. The client generally selects designs within the range appropriate to his needs, and women favor aesthetically attractive patterns. Only the gums are undecorated with designs, but are completely blackened; even here, however, the tattooing is regarded as aesthetically pleasing. Men sometimes have their godfather's names as well as their own (which incorporates the patronym) tattooed on their wrists, so that should they die in some foreign place, the local priests will regognize them as Christians and give them a proper burial.

[551] [608] [744]

Table 5 outlines the tokwariy's practice.